

Discussion 5



number Marxism and the Industrial Revolution Marxism as a theory was first formulated in a major way by the great thinkers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their work *The Communist Manifesto*. It brought the theories of socialism and communism onto a platform where it could be recognized as a system of social beliefs and a manifesto under which the working classes could unite. As a work that criticizes the working of industrial societies, one may think that *The Communist Manifesto* is totally opposed to the very process of industrialization. This however, is not true and in fact, many aspects of the working of industrialization speed up the process of the setting up of a communist society. Marx himself, in *The Communist Manifesto*, talks about how the industrial society was an improvement over the previously existing system of “the feudal system of industry”, where guilds monopolized the working of the proletariat (Marx 7). This in turn, was an improvement over the system of landed aristocracy that held all the means of production with itself. Labour too, in as much as it was free, was owned by the landed gentry. According to Marx, the transition from this social arrangement to that which was brought about by the Industrial Revolution would lead to the uniting of the workers resulting in an awareness of what the problems of their community was. This, Marx predicted, would result in widespread discontent that would eventually lead to a revolution. It is this revolution that according to Marx and Engels would lead to the formation of the new society. Discontent is not necessarily an indication of a miserable situation. On the other hand, it indicates the beginning of the period of awareness that is evident from the large number of revolutions against authority that the world has seen after industrial societies came into being. Another important evidence of the emergence of a collective mode of

thinking is the emergence of the concept of the nation state which grouped people on the basis of various social factors. At the head of most of these movements were the members of the proletariat, who had suffered for long under the hands of rulers of different communities who they thought, did not necessarily understand the complex nuances of their existence. These movements were a form of expression of dissent that the proletariat sought out as a means of making known their anger. Apart from this they also make clear what Marx and Engels talk of in their works, the need for the solidarity of the working classes. This solidarity arose in industrialized societies and this is no coincidence. It is a clear indicator of the role of industrialization in the formation of the consciousness of the worker that helps the worker realize his or her rights. The important point to emerge from this discussion is the stress that was laid upon industrialization as a step towards the formation of the utopian communist society, in the model of history that Marx had propounded. Marx does not necessarily believe in the goodness of industries as such but remains a firm believer in the utility of the industrial society as a stage in human history that in his view would ultimately turn into a classless communist society. Works Cited Marx, Karl; Engels, Friedrich. *The Communist Manifesto*. London: Verso, 1998. Print.